

From: Phil Oliver
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

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To whom it may concern,

Speaking personally as a self taught programmer of over 20 years - and seeing firsthand the computer industry rise from virtually non-existent to the powerhouse that it is today - I can safely say that Microsoft has been enormously productive and enormously good in this industry. It is safe to say that without Microsoft there wouldn't be a PC software industry worth talking about. (No, I do not work for them.)

The success of Microsoft was not due to coercion. That is the realm of the government. Its success was due to simple marketplace success and the fact that its products, for whatever their faults, generally work very well and aid hundreds of millions of people globally, every day, in doing their jobs better, or to state it more dramatically, in doing their jobs period. Those who whine that they couldn't compete are overlooking two simple facts - (1) There are plenty of companies, an entire industry, which does compete with Microsoft - (2) Microsoft has no moral obligation to "help out" those who cannot compete. This is business. Competitive products are a fact of life. So is making a profit, if a company wishes to survive.

It is not however all about competition.

My business, and the business of hundreds of thousands if not millions of other programmers, ultimately depends on the existence of widespread standards which facilitate our ability to work on any one of an enormous number of projects. The operating systems and office application software produced by Microsoft have provided such de-facto standards. It is a safe bet that the very software used by the government to attack Microsoft was written by Microsoft itself! Think about the meaning of that.

In short, the real question here is why the U.S. government is attacking one of America's greatest success stories. I say, personally, as an American citizen: I absolutely do not support any government anti-trust action against Microsoft, and I find it morally repugnant that any such action was ever taken. While the terrorists of the world conspired and successfully took the lives of thousands of Americans, and plunged the American economy into chaos in the process, the U.S. government was

spending untold millions of dollars attacking its own companies. Rather than focusing on its actual job of protecting Americans, it showed itself completely incompetent to the job and is, in actual fact, aiding the very work the terrorists wish to accomplish: the undermining of America. This is a monstrously evil inversion of priorities on the part of the U.S. government, and the fact that it suffered grievously itself in the attacks is actually justice, rewarding it for its own inaction and incompetence. It's quite easy to attack Bill Gates, you know where he works and where he lives, and he probably doesn't even own a gun. Where's Osama bin Laden?

In short - there are plenty of real threats against this country that ought to be taking 100% of the attention of its government. Stop attacking the lifeblood that makes the country worth defending in the first place. If there were such a thing, Bill Gates deserves a medal for the enormous good he and his company have achieved in a scant 27 years of existence.